



**- Special Update -**  
**New California Laws That Commenced on July 1, 2007**

**False Story: Fines for Carpool Lane Violation Increase – Simply an Email “Urban Legend”**

Assemblymember Hayashi alerts you to a false story spreading throughout the internet regarding a new fine increase for HOV lane violations. Rumors found in a widely distributed unsolicited email stating that California drivers would be fined \$1068.50 for illegally driving in the carpool lane as of July 1, 2007 are untrue. Recipients of the email should disregard the information. The fine for driving in the carpool lane varies from county to county but is generally set somewhere at about one third of the claimed \$1068.50. Contact your local traffic court for more information about carpool lane violations.

**Recycling Reaps Bigger Reward\$**

**Assembly Bill 3056 (Hancock)** increases the incentive to recycle consumer bottles and cans. The law provides that the California Refund Value (CRV) maintains a 5 cent deposit paid to consumers for bottles under 24 ounces but increases the deposit to 10 cents for beverage containers above 24 ounces.

According to the Department of Conservation, the intent of this change is to create a bigger incentive for consumers to recycle bottles and cans. Additionally, AB 3056 makes grant monies available to the general public by providing three separate grant funding programs: Market Development & Expansion Grant Program, Competitive Grants to Community Conservation Corps, and Local government or Non-Profit Agencies.

**Recycling Plastic Bags Starts at your Nearest Supermarket**

**Assembly Bill 2449 (Levine)** requires supermarkets, pharmacies and other large scale stores (with over 10,000 square feet of retail space) to provide bins for the recycling of plastic shopping bags. California has become the first state to mandate such a requirement in an effort to cut down on the

environmental harm caused by the littering of plastic shopping bags. In addition, stores are also required to make reusable bags available for purchase by their customers.

### New Advisory Committee Established to Improve Health Care Facilities

**Senate Bill 739 (Speier)** requires California to address problems with infections associated with hospitals and other like health care facilities. Starting July 1, 2007, the Department of Health Services (DHS) has appointed members to sit on a Healthcare Associated Infection (HAI) Advisory Committee to make recommendations regarding reporting cases of HAI in hospitals. General acute care hospitals now must annually report to DHS its implementation of infection surveillance and infection prevention process measures. SB 739 also requires DHS to make this information public no later than six months after receiving the data. In addition, hospitals must take steps to prepare for an influenza outbreak under the new law.

### Enhanced Public Safety Features Required for Railroad Operations

**Assembly Bill 3023 (Núñez)** establishes that railroad operators must file annual risk assessments to local law enforcement, emergency responders, and transportation personnel. Rail operators are also required to provide immediate notification to the Office of Emergency Services of possible malicious acts. It is also required that railroads properly install and maintain their signs, mile markers, and flagging systems. The purpose of AB 3023 is to enhance public safety and the safety of rail workers by codifying the industry's operating rules and by requiring enhanced safety measures when hazardous materials are being transported.

### Sugary Sodas Phased Out of Schools

**SB 965 (Escutia)** bans the sale of soft drinks in elementary, middle and high schools. Beginning July 1, 2007, students are allowed only to purchase water, milk, and some fruit and sport drinks that have limited sweeteners. This law is enacted to counter the growing epidemic of childhood obesity.

### Healthier Snacks to be Sold in School Vending Machines

**SB 12 (Escutia)** requires that foods sold in school vending machines must meet high nutritional standards and regulate the number of calories that can come from fat and sugar. Much like SB 965, this law hopes to teach children at a young age about proper nutrition and sets an example on how to eat healthier.

### Stricter Food Handling Guidelines at Restaurants

**Senate Bill 144 (Runner)** repeals current public health rules for restaurants and tightens restrictions on workers infected with diseases such as hepatitis A or the flu. In addition to a number of other provisions, the law also requires that workers maintain practices of good hygiene such as keeping fingernails clean. Any employee of a food facility who refuses to comply with these guidelines or to participate in a medical evaluation will be subject to immediate

exclusion of employment. The goal of the legislation is to ensure the cleanliness of restaurant kitchen environments and to reduce the likelihood of food borne disease transmission by prohibiting sick employees from handling food thus, restoring consumer confidence when dining out.

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